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Cholera

*18. *Q.*—SRI S. K. SAMBANDHAN (on behalf of DR. A. Chidambaranathan) : Will the Hon. the Minister for Public Health be pleased to state—

(*a*) whether the attention of the Government has been drawn to the possibility of the occurrence of cholera epidemic in 1967–68; and

(*b*) if so, the measures this Government propose to take for effectively countering it?

THE HON. SRIMATHI JOTHI VENCATACHELLUM : (*a*) Yes.

(*b*) Instructions have been issued to the Health Officers to launch periodical anticipatory inoculation campaigns in the areas vulnerable to cholera infection. Adequate steps to assess protected water-supply potential in the endemic areas as a cholera control measure, have been taken. District Health Officers have also been authorised to purchase and keep as reserve, stocks of adequate quantities of cholera medicines, drugs, disinfectants, etc., to meet any emergency. More Mobile Epidemic Units are being constituted for affording quick mobility in rushing staff and equipment to the infected areas and also for anticipatory work during non-epidemic times.

DR. H. V. HANDE : How is it that the Government are able to forecast that there would be an occurrence of the epidemic in the year 1967–68?

THE HON. SRIMATHI JOTHI VENCATACHELLUM : Sir, the Government of India conducted a survey of the cycling period of this epidemic. It is from that we know that there is a possibility of the recurrence of this epidemic in the year 1967–68.

SRI G. KRISHNAMOORTHY : Sir, is it a fact that the epidemic is there now in the City?

THE HON. SRIMATHI JOTHI VENCATACHELLUM : Yes, Sir.

SRI G. KRISHNAMOORTHY : What parts of the City have been affected, Sir?

THE HON. SRIMATHI JOTHI VENCATACHELLUM : Tondiarpet, Sir.

SRI M. SUBBIAH CHETTIAR : Is it in the City only or has it spread to other places in the districts also?

THE HON. SRIMATHI JOTHI VENCATACHELLUM : Sir, the information with the Government is that the new type of cholera, called "Kerala" cholera has come to Tondiarpet.

SRI M. SUBBIAH CHETTIAR : Has that been imported from Kerala as we are exporting rice to that State? Sir, there is a feeling among the public that the present rice supplied by the Government in the ration shops is responsible for cases of diarrhoea and other stomach disorders

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THE HON. SRIMATHI JOTHI VENCATACHELLUM: The hon. Member should ask the Government of India about it.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The main question relates to the probable occurrence of the epidemic in the year 1967–68 and not to the present cholera. 3-20 p.m.

DR. H. V. HANDE: Sir, usually the general medical practitioners refer such cases to the hospitals. Is there any method by which the practitioners are informed whether the cases referred are cholera cases or not? If they have this information, they can do some preventive work and the hands of the Government could be strengthened?

THE HON. SRIMATHI JOTHI VENCATACHELLUM: Private doctors can refer the cases to the epidemologist and he will be in a position to say whether the cases referred are cholera cases or not, or any other disease.

DR. H. V. HANDE: As soon as the cases are referred to the infectious diseases hospital or any other hospital, the doctors there keep quiet. If on the other hand, they telephone back to the doctors who referred the cases, or send a letter to them about the nature of the case, they will be able to prevent the further spread of the disease much more effectively. I want to know whether there is any method by which the doctors are informed immediately or a day or two later about the nature of the cases referred?

THE HON. SRIMATHI JOTHI VENCATACHELLUM: When the private doctor sends a patient to the hospital, he can also send a requisition to the hospital asking for information about the nature of the disease the patient is suffering from.

SRI M. SUBBIAH CHETTIAR: Sir, are the Government aware that in several hospitals not only in the City but also in the mufassal, there is not sufficient space available to accommodate the cholera patients and several complaints have been sent to Government in regard to this? What was the action taken by the Government to improve the bed-strength position?

THE HON. SRIMATHI JOTHI VENCATACHELLUM: Now, Sir, in all the district and taluk headquarters hospitals ther are infectious diseases wards. Apart from that when there are many cases of cholera, temporary sheds are also put up to accommodate them.

SRI K. ANBAZHAGAN: Sir, the epidemic cycle is marked for the year 1967–68. I would like to know whether there is any area fixed or suggested as more vulnerable to cholera and whether extra preventive measures are taken in that area?

THE HON. SRIMATHI JOTHI VENCATACHELLUM: No. Sir. The precautionary measures are taken for the State as a whole.

MR. CHAIRMAN: In order to get a fuller answer, Question No. 19 stands postponed.